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tendency seems to have been to magnify the gifts which he possessed in order to conceal those wherein he is deficient. We would not uncharitably judge this tendency, although his publication of the poems in this stage of his career has the character of a reassertion of the spirit in which they were written. That the publication was a mistake, there can be little doubt; that his genius shall direct itself to the truer and nobler work of which he is capable, is our hope.

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12. — *Charles Lamb. A Memoir.* By BARRY CORNWALL. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1866. 12mo. pp. 304.

It was not to be expected that Mr. Procter's volume would contain much information about Lamb entirely new. Neither much novelty nor much criticism was looked for, but a friendly warmth of recollection, and a genuine appreciation, fit to mingle with the same feelings in the reader. And it is exactly this that the book gives.

We have the old story over again of Lamb's school-days with Cole-ridge at Christ's Hospital, his desk at the India House, his insanity, the dreadful disorder of his sister's mind, and the tragedy of their mother's death. Again we hear of his tender care of his sister, and their journeys from house to house in London, his friends, his tastes, his books, his evenings at the "Salutation and Cat," his pipes of Orinooko; again of his joy at his release from the India House, and again of the weariness which followed it. The facts are the pleasanter because they are old, and the manner is the pleasanter because it is new, — the manner of a kind-hearted old man telling to the new-comers the recollections of his younger days.

Mr. Procter, in his Preface, expresses the hope that "the advocate for modern times will try to admit into the circle of his sympathy" his recollections of Charles Lamb. As to the recollections themselves, we think that no one, whatever times he advocates, will dislike their affectionate tone, or even quarrel with their occasional discursiveness, natural enough to a time of life when tracks of reminiscence are plentiful; and as to the subject of them, is not Lamb more widely read and more generally appreciated by us moderns than by the generation for which the *Elia* Essays were written? Indeed, in his constant simplicity, in his love of natural art, in his love of his kind, he was himself an advocate for modern times. It is true that he enjoyed things out of date, and had a taste for fashions gone by, yet it was a taste that did not lead him to the desert of stunting pedantry, but to older gardens, whose rich soil he knew, but saw neglected. A taste which made

Lamb one of the first to seek among the writers of the Elizabethan age the freedom and strength which could not be seen in the men of a later day cannot fairly be called antique, and is rather akin to the feelings of that school which now goes by the name of modern.

It would be a mistake to suppose that, because Lamb liked a "fine last-century face" and a fine century-before-last writer, he had no connection with the present time. Nature is always modern, and Lamb was natural from his first stutter to his last. He and Wordsworth together helped to throw up those earthworks from behind which the nineteenth century, with its "nature" and "No-Popery" cannon, has perhaps too liberally bombarded the eighteenth. In America, certainly, there is a love of Lamb's genius not by any means confined to the contemporaries of Mr. Procter, but felt by the younger growth, that breathes the air which Emerson has helped to purify, and Clough to warm; and even in England, despite that fogginess which, creeping from London over all her shores, has made many wise old men mistake gas-lamps for stars, and at length to doubt whether, after all, the veil of mist is not a providential shield against the too glaring rays of the sun, — even in that fog there are other younger ones who find in Lamb the fresh breath of nature to lift up the gathering damps and show the green earth beneath, fair as before.

And in other respects, too, Lamb seems to be not only modern, but even *future*. Mr. Joseph Paice has not yet so many followers as he will some time number; and though the essay on "Modern Gallantry" was written nearly fifty years ago, the text will long continue a good one. And the essay on acting Shakespeare's tragedies is full of a refinement of feeling less likely to prove the ruin of the cothurnus-makers to-day than a few hundred years hence. In everything that he wrote there was a delicacy of flavor which every increased delicacy in the taste of the world will render more appreciable. The palate in these matters fortunately grows more sensitive with added age.

But whatever becomes of Lamb in the inscrutable minds of those who are hereafter to think, it is enough for those who still enjoy him to find pleasure always new in his wonderful humor, in the delicious taste of his style, in his rare and delicate wisdom. We know him as we know few other prose-writers, for he has written of his feelings, his friends, his books, in a way to make them our own. Hood, whose life calls for even greater sympathy, kept his thoughts at such a distance from himself, that now his rollicking humor makes us forget his sufferings, and in a moment his sufferings cast a gloom over his humor. But in thinking of Lamb we may sympathize at once with his humor, his sadness, and his wise reflections. Even in such bursts of pure fun as

the "Roast Pig" or "Sarah Battle" essay, we do not forget who wrote them. And the thought of those essays, as fresh now as when Mrs. Battle first called cribbage an ungrammatical game, make us sure that he who can ever find it in his heart to think that Elia had better be taken up to the garret, or laid out on a top shelf, must be, not an advocate for modern times, but a very *advocatus Diaboli*.

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13. — *The Picture of St. John*. By BAYARD TAYLOR. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1866. 16mo. pp. vi., 220.

A PIECE of conscientious literary work, patiently elaborated upon a well-digested plan, and carefully thought out in the details, is so rare in our hurried generation, that it merits respectful consideration. Mr. Taylor's new poem is of this kind. It shows marks of mature design, adequately sustained by careful finish in its parts. A poem of more than two hundred pages, which carries the reader along with interested pleasure to the end, must have in it something of a higher quality than is at all common. We can think of no other long American poem of evenly sustained power except Mr. Longfellow's "Golden Legend." In that we have the finest aroma of the Middle Ages; and through all the brilliant episodes of picturesque scenery there runs a connecting thread of personal interest and tender human sympathy, unbroken to the end. Mr. Taylor's poem, on the other hand, is modern in more than one sense. It is essentially and designedly subjective. It gives the history of the development and training of an artistic nature, beginning with the pure joy of sensation, arriving at a happy poise of all its faculties in the visible reproduction and definition of its emotion through art, and at last refined and perfected by sorrow. The story, though somewhat improbable, is told with grace and feeling, and varied with many German and Italian landscapes, broadly and warmly painted with that idealization in which memory is so skilful. The defect of the poem is a too great introversion of the thought and sentiment, inherent perhaps in its very nature as a monologue, — a sin which it shares with a great part of the poetry of the century. But the fault strikes us more because, while Mr. Taylor's real object is to describe, as Beattie has done in his "Minstrel," the influences which awaken and train the artistic consciousness of a poet, he has made his hero a painter. It is, perhaps, true that certain qualities are common to the natures of both; but however it may be with a poet, we doubt whether a painter would go far in his art who was forever analyzing his own emotion and prying into its constituents, instead of surrendering himself joyously to the beauty of the